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UNCLAS PRETORIA 002441

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/CBA NSMITH-NISSLEY

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SUBJECT: NOMINATION FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S AWARD FOR CORPORATE EXCELLENCE - DOW CHEMICAL

REF: STATE 66434

1. (U) I am pleased to nominate Dow Southern Africa for the Secretary of State's 2005 Award for Corporate Excellence in

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recognition of its outstanding corporate citizenship and visionary employment practices in the face of South Africa's overwhelming HIV/AIDS health pandemic.

2. (U) It is no surprise that the world's largest provider of chemical, plastic, and agricultural products should also boast one of the most comprehensive and visionary health programs combating the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 1989, Dow addressed the emerging health threat with the same tenacity that had become its trademark in building a \$40 billion chemical empire. In South Africa, Dow anticipated that the new disease would inflict a devastating toll on a large percentage of the population. While many countries were still trying to come to terms with what HIV/AIDS was, Dow Southern Africa had already developed a company policy and awareness campaign for Dow's 43,000 employees worldwide, their dependents, and communities. Perhaps due to this foresight, Dow's actual losses to HIV/AIDS from 1995-2005 were only 20 percent of the industry norm.

3. (U) Dow's HIV/AIDS comprehensive program is used as a standard by many other businesses and includes the following elements: senior executive support, awareness and prevention programs, treatment programs, a business impact assessment, and community involvement.

4. (U) Dow Southern Africa is tackling HIV/AIDS at the most senior level. The Board of Directors is directly involved in developing company policy and training programs for HIV/AIDS. The company has created comprehensive awareness, education, and prevention programs that offer workplace discussion forums, peer group educators, in-house counselors, and voluntary testing. For employees and their dependents that become infected, Dow provides a nutritional diet, anti-retroviral medicines, and treatment for opportunistic infections as well as home-based care. Additionally, Dow teams up with customers, suppliers, and business partners to educate as many people as possible about HIV/AIDS and to provide community-based care. Dow Southern Africa currently supports HIV/AIDS clinics and orphanages in Sasolburg (Free State Province), Margate (KwaZulu-Natal Province), and King Williams Town (Eastern Cape Province). Dow also administers "knowledge, attitudes, and practices" (KAP) surveys to its employees in an effort to understand how the pandemic might impact its business.

5. (U) Dow Southern Africa collaborates with the South African Department of Health and NGOs to continuously evaluate and improve its HIV/AIDS services. Dow's proactive approach to helping its employees and their families fight HIV/AIDS has helped Dow achieve some of the lowest HIV/AIDS prevalence, disability, and death rates.

7. (U) In recognition of Dow's extraordinary HIV/AIDS programs and their positive impact on employees, their families and communities, Dow Southern Africa is nominated for the 2005 Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence.

FRAZER